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SUBJECT: Poland to Host Visegrad Meeting of Environment
Ministers in Krakow, April 7-8

Ref: (A) Warsaw 1396 (B) Warsaw 1555

(U) This cable is sensitive, but unclassified, and NOT for
Internet distribution.

1. (U) On April 7-8, the Polish Minister of Environment will host his counterparts from Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Republics in Krakow. MinEnvironment officials report that the primary focus of the agenda will be to coordinate their approaches to a variety of environmental issues within the EU. The ministers will discuss the possibility of coordinating approaches on climate change issues, including emissions trading. The EC has not approved National Action Plans for CO2 emissions for Poland and the Czech Republic, which could result in significantly reduced access for Polish and Czech companies to engage in emissions trading on the common EU market (please see reftels for more details about Poland's concerns). The ministers will also discuss their shared concerns about the negative effects on industry of the EU's proposed REACH directive, and the potential for cooperating on Lisbon Agenda issues related to the environment.

2. (U) The Polish Ministry of Environment hopes to exchange experiences trying to comply with the EU's Waste Directive, particularly related to requirements to institute recycling programs for cars and computers. Poland is also interested in discussing the Nature 2000 Directive and means to finance programs under it. The ministers are also expected to discuss common approaches to using structural funds to support environmental projects.

3. (U) Poland has proposed that the ministers also discuss the Carpathian Framework Convention, an agreement signed in 2004 the Visegrad countries with Ukraine and Romania to develop joint projects to improve the regional environment. Poland is interested in developing specific projects to follow up on this initiative.

4. (SBU) Comment: Poland has found that it shares many of the same views as its other three Visegrad colleagues in meeting EU environmental requirements. It also shares many of the same concerns, including on issues like REACH and emissions trading. While our contacts at the Ministry of Environment do not expect significant achievements from this meeting, they do hope it will lead to greater policy coordination among the four in Brussels. The good news is that, to date, the Polish Government shares many of the same concerns on these issues as American companies working in Europe. End comment.

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